

*Admission  
20.9.28*

ARMY INDUSTRIAL COLLEGE  
(Course, 1927-1928)

GRADUATION EXERCISES.

Addresses by

General B. F. Cheatham,  
Quartermaster General.

Colonel, C. B. Robbins,  
Assistant Secretary of War.

Colonel, W. P. Wooten,  
Director, Army Industrial College.

June 22, 1928.

Remarks - Colonel W. P. Wooten, C.E.  
Director, A.I.C.  
Introducing Colonel Charles B. Robbins Assistant Sect'y of War.

Mr. Secretary, Officers of the Army Industrial College:

The meeting this morning marks the close of your course at the Army Industrial College. During this course you have been receiving the training which should fit you in time of war to fill capably and efficiently important positions in the organization charged with the prompt procurement of those supplies whose un-interrupted flow will prove so indispensable to the success of our military forces. It is unnecessary for me to dilate upon the importance of your training or upon the vital necessity of the work for which you have been trained. The zeal and assiduity with which you have applied yourselves to the work of your course are sufficient evidence of your appreciation of these facts and are a sufficient guarantee that if, unfortunately, this country should suddenly face an emergency requiring its utmost effort, there will be some officers to whom we can turn for trained and capable assistance in solving the procurement problems which will confront us. Speaking for the staff of the college, I wish to express to you gentlemen our appreciation of the interest you have shown and the high character of the work you have done.

It is now my pleasure to introduce to you the gentleman to whom the Congress has intrusted the mobilization of our industry, the gentleman who guides and directs us in all our procurement activities, Colonel Charles B. Robbins, The Assistant Secretary of War

Gentlemen - Colonel Robbins.

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REMARKS - Colonel W. P. Wooten, C.E.,  
Director, A.I.C.  
INTRODUCING Maj. Gen. B. F. Cheatham  
Quartermaster General.

While the Assistant Secretary of War is charged with procurement control, the active instruments which he employs in procurement are the supply branches of the Army. Of these there is none whose duties cover a wider field than those of the Quartermaster Corps. The Chief of that corps has kindly consented to address us today. It gives me pleasure to introduce Major General B. Frank Cheatham, The Quartermaster General.

Gentlemen - General Cheatham.

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and trained to handle such a problem, could make no intelligent progress because there was nothing upon which to base requirements.

I am told that in April, 1917, the bases for computing requirements were 500,000 men. This was soon raised to 1,078,000. Shortly thereafter another 500,000 was added, and finally in July the figures went to two million. Under these circumstances, is it to be wondered at that the supply branches failed to function perfectly? They were given an impossible task. This confusion was, of course, reflected in Industry. Constant changes in our demand for supplies and equipment certainly were not conducive to their orderly production; but, on the contrary, tended to slow down the output at a time when supplies were surely needed for the mobilization of troops being called to the colors.

To prevent a recurrence of this, The Assistant Secretary, following the war, inaugurated the system which is now being worked out by the supply branches under his supervision.

At the beginning progress was slow. We had to grope our way. Change in mobilization plans affecting requirements caused duplication of effort; but, as the War Department Mobilization Plan has developed, so has the procurement planning, until today we have a definite plan upon which all supply branches are basing their requirements.

I should like to emphasize this phase of procurement planning and point out the rather obvious fact that this figuring of requirements is our foundation - our real point of departure. If there is error, it will be reflected all through in the almost equally tragic form of shortages or excesses. So it is important that plans should be as simple and definite as possible and that changes, not only in the plan but in tables of allowances, be made as infrequently as possible.

When the requirements are known it is possible to determine the "procurement objective." This is the net amount to be procured and is the difference between the gross requirements demanded by the plan and the stocks on hand, which include war reserve and the estimated quantities of other stocks normally available.

The districts to which the net requirements are apportioned by the supply branches for procurement planning are all striving to divide their respective loads equitably and among as many facilities as is consistent with their immediate objective. This will obviate thrusting the entire burden on limited area as was the case in the last emergency. In addition to the facilities with which schedules of production are being placed to meet the requirements, an adequate number of other qualified plants, with known capacities, are being listed and set up in the branch plans as "reserve facilities."

To minimize the need for these strategic raw materials in which we may be deficient, our plans provide for substitutes wherever possible. Each branch is engaged in study and research in an effort to develop satisfactory substitutes, and has presented to the War Department a ten-year program with an estimate of the cost involved.

Conservation of the natural resources of the country has come to be of the utmost national importance. This is true in peace, and in war must be a paramount consideration of the Government. As you know, conservation embraces the elimination of wasteful and non-essential uses of material and labor, and provides for their diversion and concentration in the fabrication of the essential items. In the elimination of waste, industry has made such remarkable strides that today little, if any, raw materials remain unutilized. Enormous quantities of by-products now marketed formerly went to waste.

When we first undertook the Industrial Surveys, upon which our procurement planning is based, Industry was none too enthusiastic and was somewhat skeptical. It required patience and a full and frank explanation of what it was all about, together with the assurances that the data given us would not be available to their commercial rivals, before we could gain the confidence and help of the business men. I think it safe to say that the relationship between the business men of the country and the several branches of the War Department is closer today than ever before, due largely to the confidence engendered by the contacts established through the Office of The Assistant Secretary of War. This friendly relation with business must be maintained, and it is the duty of this class to carry on the good work and to improve the present excellent relations.

The Army Industrial College is a great institution. It has filled a very real need in our military education and has now taken its place along side of our other important military colleges. To it we should send only carefully selected men.

This is a day of specialization. We must have experts to handle our major activities; without them we cannot hope to achieve the maximum result. The graduates of this College have specialized in procurement and should be used for that purpose. It is my hope that members of the Quartermaster Corps will be so assigned as to give us the maximum benefit of their knowledge- not only in procurement planning work, but in the extremely important role of current procurement where we need our most experienced men to develop improved methods for the supply of our peace-time Army.

I think you can recognize that, while granting full importance to War planning, we must not lose sight of the fact that current procurement still holds an important place in our scheme of things. The Chief of a Supply Department has two imperative tasks: to supply the present Army, and to be prepared to expand to meet any